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## The North American Review

*"The best connected record of the growth of native thought and scholarship."*—OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, BOSTON, 1878.

### WILLARD PHILLIPS

WILLARD PHILLIPS, the second editor of THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, was born in Bridgewater, Massachusetts, on December 19, 1784. His early education was that of the average New England youth, "instruction in summer by a school-mistress, and in winter by a school-master, with Noah Webster's spelling-book the principal classic." In his nineteenth year he took charge of a school at Goshen. His Latin studies began with a fellow-townsmen, Calvin Briggs, at Chesterfield, when the latter was studying medicine under the direction of Dr. Bryant, the father of William Cullen Bryant. The friendship of the old practitioner was given to young Mr. Phillips, and lasted through life. After various educational vicissitudes he was entered at Harvard College in 1806. The route to Cambridge, he states, "was by way of Boston on a somewhat cloudy evening, through streets rather perplexing." The following day he, with sixty-four other candidates, was admitted as a freshman in the university.

Within a year of his graduation he was appointed tutor in the college, first in Latin, and afterward in arithmetic, geometry, and natural philosophy, keeping the position in all four years. During this period he began his professional studies in the law, and in 1815 associated himself in the office of the Honorable William Sullivan, a man of distinction in his time. His connection with this REVIEW is thus described by a fellow-associate:

"During December, 1814, and January, 1815, while Mr. Phillips was still one of the instructors of Harvard University, an association was formed, consisting of President Kirkland, Edward T. Channing, Mr. Phillips, and others, for starting a literary periodical, under the title "The New England Magazine and Review," Mr. Phillips being the proposed editor. Articles of association were adopted, and sundry meetings were held, the records of which, kept by Mr. Channing, as secretary, he has preserved. In a letter written by Mr. Channing, January 5, 1815, he says to his correspondent: 'How you would have laughed could you have peeped into my snug office for two or three days past, and have seen the great men—learned doctors of law and divinity, tutors

at colleges, editors and publishers holding solemn debate on the magazine; one inviting a prospectus, another talking about style, a third counting the cost and chances of success, and, lastly, your correspondent himself listening to all that was said and recording it as secretary of the Meeting."

"When the preparations had been made for announcing the publication, the associates learned that a similar one was proposed by William Tudor, then just returned from his travels in Europe. . . . He was a personal friend of some of the associates, therefore the field was left open to him.

"The first number of the bimonthly NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW AND MISCELLANEOUS JOURNAL accordingly came out under Mr. Tudor's editorship in May, 1815, and was continued during a year, at the end of which time he put it at the disposal of Mr. Phillips, Mr. Tudor voluntarily proposing and choosing to continue editor for one year longer without salary. . . . THE REVIEW, at the time of the pecuniary responsibility being assumed by Mr. Phillips, needed the utmost economy as well as all the activity, talent, and learning that could be brought to its aid to bear it up, and Mr. Phillips, seeing that the usual publisher's commission weighed heavily upon its resources, had the copies of the number for May, 1816, sent from the printers to his office, and a part of them were there inclosed and despatched to subscribers. Messrs. Wells & Lilly, then the leading publishing firm in Boston, who had published the work the preceding year, very soon, and before all the copies of THE REVIEW had been distributed, liberally offered to publish it during the year free of commissions, which helped materially to carry it through that year.

"On Mr. Tudor's retiring from the editorship in 1817, an association of contributors was formed, consisting of some of the associates and some new ones—viz.: John Gallison, known as the reporter of the early decisions of Judge Story; Nathaniel Hale, editor of the Boston *Daily Advertiser*; Richard H. Dana; Edward T. Channing; Mr. Phillips; William Powell Mason, and Jared Sparks. Mr. Sparks was editor during that year of the fifth and sixth volumes.

"The associates held weekly meetings for reading and deciding upon communications, and selecting and distributing subjects to be written upon. These, though in some sort business meetings, were kept up with much interest, vivacity, and harmony, at which the literary friends of the associates not unfrequently attended, and the zeal and spirit of the association were by degrees infused into THE REVIEW, and the effect was manifested in reaction by subscriptions and communications. Mr. Phillips was a frequent contributor for some years and an occasional one subsequently until about 1836. One of his early articles was upon Professor Hedge's logic, then just published. . . . Most of Mr. Phillips's articles were upon works of imagination and taste, the reviewing of which did not require any special preparation, and accordingly did not interfere with his professional and other business pursuits."<sup>1</sup>

Later Mr. Phillips was a member of the Massachusetts Legislature; then ill-health sent him to Cuba, and the reminiscence of this voyage was subsequently incorporated into an article for THE REVIEW. In 1837 the Governor of Massachusetts appointed Judge Phillips, as he was then, on a commission to formulate a code of the law of crime and punishment. He was an extensive writer on this subject, and his published works include *Digest of Pickering's Reports*; editor first edition of *Collyer on Partnership*; A manual of *Political Economy*, and *Propositions Concerning Protection and Free Trade*. His death occurred September 9, 1876.

<sup>1</sup> *Portraits of Eminent Americans*, by John Livingston, Vol. III., pp. 291-303.

## "RHODA"

BY WILLARD PHILLIPS

Second Editor of "The Review"

*From THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW of July, 1816*

Rhoda.—A novel.—By the author of "Things by their right names," "Plain Sense," &c. 2 vols. 12mo. Boston—Published by Wells & Lilly.

THIS novel presents a lively and pretty faithful picture of fashionable life. Its moral influence is favourable to virtue. The first deviations from principle are well delineated in the most conspicuous character, and the progressive steps, from brisk animal spirits to levity, folly, disregard of obligations, imprudence, and finally to remorse and misfortune, are skilfully traced. This character is a susceptible, brilliant, fanciful woman, whose dispositions are always good, but her conduct often wrong. She makes just reflections, but has not sufficient strength of character to execute her good purposes, and is continually liable to be diverted from propriety and rectitude, by the artful who are her inferiors in point of understanding. She is, in short, one of those lovely bewitching creatures, whom every body admires and excuses, but whose conduct nobody approves.

The work is not remarkable for spirit and animation. We cannot promise the reader that his interest will not flag a little in the first part of the second volume, but we can assure him, that he will be well compensated for persisting in the perusal. It belongs to the numerous and constantly increasing class of productions, in which fiction is brought home to daily occurrences and observations. Readers are apt to complain of such, that they are monotonous and ordinary; they do not sufficiently abound in "moving incidents," frightful situations, and apprehensions of direful events which never happen. We do not affect to proscribe all the agitating fictions, with which the novel-reading fair daily distress themselves. Feigned as well as real sufferings may sometimes have a salutary influence, and variety is desirable for its own sake, and then an occasional interruption of the more gentle undulations of emotion, by the whirls of transport, or the storms of the turbulent passions, may leave the mental atmosphere more lucid and serene. But we would not always be tossed and tempest driven—let us sometimes be satisfied with the face of nature in its more usual state, not violently agitated, nor yet perfectly tranquil. It requires greater progress in the arts to exhibit with this aspect, it demands greater skill and delicacy of execution in the artist, and an improved susceptibility and taste in the observer. This truth is no less apparent in other arts, than in that of writing novels. Young belles, who have not been trained into a perception of real beauty and elegance, by judicious mothers and governesses, flutter out of the boarding school in the most brilliant hues, and by their glitter, dazzle the eyes, and

turn the heads of the poor beaus, not yet far advanced in their teens. Painters, in the early period of their art, are apt to choose extravagant subjects and situations; and having set them forth in glaring colours, astonish the well-meaning multitude. In every art, the sort of specimens which children and the unskilful most admire, is the same with the masterpieces of a ruder state. The writers of fictitious narratives began with superhuman characters, and preternatural incidents, and thus kindled the admiration and curiosity of their rude readers, who would have gone to sleep over a probable story, elegantly told. Authors and readers early quitted the wild regions of giants, and dragons, and enchantments; but a great distance was to be passed over, before they could arrive at their proper home, among natural objects and real persons. Each alternately led the way, the author now guiding the publick taste, and now being directed by it. Their perils and disasters, by the way, have not been few; for they have often been shut up in Gothick towers, thrown into uncomfortable dungeons, pursued by apparitions, and were very ill used by monks in convents, and by robbers in deserts. Even after infernal personages and miraculous events had been abandoned, and it was required of an author to account for what he caused to take place in a more satisfactory way, the imaginations of men were for a long time affected by the terrors with which they had been surrounded, and they often mistook a figure in a piece of tattered tapestry for a spirit, fresh from the nether world, and would convert a crazy chateau into an enchanted castle, and indulge for a time in the illusion, that there was something beyond the laws of nature, in their surprises, successes, and failures. At length all pretence of mystery ceased, and writers, who do not professedly lay their scenes beyond the limits of experience, must accept for machinery, such as they are, the laws of nature, and the passions of men. They are not confined to what is common and familiar. Strong passions still exist, and extraordinary events occur, and whatever is real, may well find a place in fiction. Many are led, by boldness and energy of genius, to prefer them, while others resort to them through weakness, and make use of them—that they may create that interest by their incidents, which they are unable to produce by a skilful management; they dress what they serve up, but rudely, but then they make up, as well as they can for this defect, by the number and profusion of dishes. The modern novels generally are better calculated to produce delight and improvement, than wonder and agitation. They answer all the useful purposes of a lesson, without its formality and tediousness. In them, we have the most minute and finished representations of manners. The privilege of using narrative or dialogue, and the liberty of detailing the most minute incidents, and marking the most trifling occurrences, provided a regard be had to grace and propriety, give the writer more freedom and play, than he is allowed in any other kind of composition, and enable him to bring out and exhibit those subtle and evanescent accompaniments, to

which characters and actions owe a greater part of their beauty and deformity.

We shall not proceed to analyze and review this book, as we can say nothing of it which will not occur to almost every reader, and our purpose in making it the occasion of these few remarks, will be accomplished, if we shall add something towards drawing to it that attention, which we think it deserves.

## AMERICAN LITERATURE ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

BY DR. WALTER CHANNING

*From THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW of November, 1815*

### REFLECTIONS ON THE LITERARY DELINQUENCY OF AMERICA

THE title of this paper contains a serious charge. It charges Americans with delinquency in that, to which every other civilized nation chiefly owes its character. It implies that this country wants literary distinction. That we have not entered the service of literature. That we want the results of intellectual labour. That were we to cease from a distinct national existence, the great events of our history would stand alone on the blank of our national character, unsupported by their causes, unsanctioned by their effects. That the whole elements of our literature, were they collected into one mass, would amount merely to accidental efforts of a very few adventurous individuals; our history would be found little more than state topography; our politicks ephemeral effusions of party zeal, and our poetry without a character. An appeal might be made from this melancholy record to our philosophy and science, and the labours of Franklin and Rittenhouse claimed as the heralds of our literary character. But it is hardly to be expected that the phenomena of the age should confer national character. They are accidents of intellect. They are claimed for science and literature in general, not yielded to one nation, to give it a character. These extraordinary men very rarely appear in any country, and their having once appeared, is not an assurance that their like will be looked upon again. . . .

Our literary delinquency may principally be resolved into our dependence on English literature. We have been so perfectly satisfied with it, that we have not yet made an attempt towards a literature of our own. In the pre-eminent excellence of this foreign literature we have lost sight of, or neglected our own susceptibility of intellectual labour. So easy is it for us to read English books, that we have hardly thought it worth while to write any for ourselves. Perhaps if it had been as difficult to command these inexhaustible literary resources, as we should find it to command those of the Germans, we might have gone seriously to work, and entered vigorously on the noble, dignified

employment of our minds. Apologists for our literary delinquency, however, reply, that we were colonies of Great Britain, and virtually as much Englishmen as the inhabitants of any county in England. That place signifies nothing; at least, that the pious Antonine said so; that the mind is the same every where; that it lends its own influence to the circumstances in which it is placed, and admits those of things and beings around it, just as far as it pleases, and no farther. That a peculiarity of language is of no consequence to a literature; that the language of the mind is its own vigorous, overpowering operations; that these last only require language to be clothed with, not to be known by. We are told, that the different modes of using language, *viz.* its various styles, are distinctive of those who invent or adopt them. That Milton will never be confounded with Shakespeare, because they used a common language, and that when Americans write books, their works will at once be distinguished from those of England. In fine, we are told, that we are destined to the highest literary reputation. . . . The truth is, we have wanted literary enterprise, and been sadly deficient in genuine intellectual courage. Circumstances beyond a doubt existed, to prevent our fathers from leaving us a literature. It was hard for them to print, even if they wrote. They were perhaps too dependent on the rough and toilsome circumstances in which they were cast, to lay the foundation of a literature. Perhaps they did enough in founding an empire. They also came here well versed in the learning of their own country, for such was England, though no longer their home; and if they depended on what their brethren in England did for literature, they had claims which an American can never have. In founding colleges for us, perhaps they dreamt they were laying the corner stone of literature.

The literary dependence to which we have been long reconciled, has become so much a part of our character, that the individual who ventures to talk about surmounting it, is thought the wildest of schemers. He is assailed on every hand with the *cui bono?* that most fatal of questions to any plan which is not cast in the mould of domestic economicks, or which would tend to allure a society from the dull contemplation of its physical wants, and the cheapest means of supplying them. Literary reputation! what is its worth? what *need* have we of a literature?

Oh reason not the need:—

Allow not nature more than nature needs,

Man's life is cheap as beasts':

Notwithstanding the literary delinquency of America, still we have done something. Perhaps it would not be fair, to place the period of our national existence among the dark ages of letters. But our best writers have been unfortunate in the vehicles they have chosen as depositories of their intellectual productions. These depositories have been chiefly newspapers and pamphlets of various kinds. Now

there is something ephemeral and temporary, in the very nature of these publications. Hence their contents are not safe. A man who writes in them does not think of writing for immortality. His mental labours, of course soon are over, and almost of course, badly done. If it turn out that his communication pleases, it excites but a momentary emotion of pleasure, and his successor into the columns fills his place as perfectly and almost as successfully, as the types which were devoted to their several compositions. The literature, farther, of newspapers and pamphlets, is almost always controversial literature; and in controversy we are always more interested for the champions of party, than for their writings. Controversy, it must be confessed however, among us has done as much for literature, as controversy has among other nations. It has gratified the passions, the prejudices, the whims of the parties concerned, and when the flame is extinguished, the pamphlets which did so much to support it, repose in their own ashes.

## YOUNG UNITED STATES

BY DANIEL WEBSTER

*From THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW of July, 1820**Examination Of Some Remarks In The Quarterly Review On The Laws Of Creditor And Debtor In The United States*

THE Quarterly Review for May 1819 contained two articles concerning the United States; one a review of Fearon's <sup>1</sup> book of travels, and the other a review of Mr. Bristed's book upon the resources of America. The Quarterly Review is, as everybody knows, extensively circulated, and much read in this country; and these articles excited, at the time of their appearance, no small degree of attention. It would be difficult, we imagine, in the same number of pages, to crowd more misrepresentation, or betray more ignorance, than appears in these articles, especially that which we have first mentioned. To the common vapourings of the English presses we pay little attention. These oracles are no more to be regarded, in their vituperations of the government and people of this country, than similar oracles among ourselves, in *their* abuse of the government and people of England. The leaders of such assemblages as the Manchester mob, and the orators in the palace-yard, find it convenient to inflame the passions of their auditors by declaiming, in terms of high panegyric, of the condition of America; wisely contriving, by a sort of contrast, to breed discontent, and to sharpen the feeling of hatred towards their own government. Other speakers and other writers, finding or thinking

<sup>1</sup> The last that we have heard of this *author* is, that some time last winter a criminal information was moved for against him, in the King's Bench, for a conspiracy to produce a riot, at the election of the Lord Mayor.



it necessary to refute these representations, naturally enough run into opposite extremes, and set off their own condemnation and abuse of America against the extravagant encomiums of their adversaries. All this is in the course of things. It is no more than must always be expected, in a country with such a government, as that of England; and it is of no consequence to us, what is the issue of this little and low strife of temporary politics. We suffer about equally by the commendation of one party and the abuse of the other; and we ought to be regardless of both.

But different, far different, is the case, when a work of established reputation in the literary world professes to discuss our character and condition. When gentlemen and scholars undertake to write about us, we have more interest in what they say, and are less disposed to acquiesce in misrepresentation and injustice. The writers of the articles in question seem to consider themselves as speaking *about* America, but not *to* America. They do not take the United States into the account of those who are to read their works, and judge of them. They do not look at the reading and thinking men on this side the Atlantic, as forming any part of that great tribunal of the PUBLIC, to which they acknowledge a responsibility. In this respect, in our humble judgment, they commit an oversight. English scholars, English editors, and English politicians have heretofore felt an unconquerable reluctance to admit the people of this country to a participation of those honours which belong to the civilized world, and the great family of Christian communities. They have been unwilling to see that North America has ceased to be a colony; and still desire to regard her, so far as respects acquirements, talents, and character, like Jamaica, Malta, or the Cape of Good Hope. This attempt, we may be allowed to say, will not succeed. America is entitled to her place among the nations, and nothing can keep her from it. It is in nature, as it appears to be in the purpose of Providence, that a people shall, within a short period of time, exist on this side the ocean, speaking the English language, springing principally from English origin, adopting English laws, and possessing the invaluable blessings of English institutions, so numerous, that the amount of British population, added or subtracted, would hardly make a sensible difference. Already the United States contain as many people as England, and among them there is, if not as full, yet as respectable a proportion belonging to the reading class. Whatever appears in England, and attracts attention there, in the departments of science, literature, poetry, or politics, appears here also, thirty days afterwards, with uniform regularity. We receive these reviews wet from the press, and read and reprint and circulate them. We venture to say, that in no part of the island of Great Britain, London excepted, is reading so general among the population as in New England. Having thus, as we believe we have, in the United States, a larger reading community than either Scotland or Ireland, how is it that America is not to compose

a part, an important part, of that PUBLIC, before which a scientific and literary journal, composed and published in the English language, is to stand in judgment? We would modestly, but firmly, insist on this reasonable participation in the authority and dignity of public opinion. We hold the right, and mean both to exercise and to defend it, of having and of expressing opinions on subjects of science and literature, and respecting those who discuss these subjects.

It is a natural prejudice, that an old country should be unwilling to admit a young one upon any terms of equality. England herself is not thought old enough, nor respectable enough, to assume the port and bearing of an equal in the celestial empire of China; and there is elsewhere, as well as at Pekin, a dislike and scorn for the *novi homines*. English politicians and English scholars entertain toward us, when we press for admittance into their society and fellowship, something like that feeling, at once scornful and jealous, with which the Earl of Wharton addressed the twelve new peers in the reign of Queen Anne. Yet this prejudice and this reluctance must give way; this scorn must be subdued, and this jealousy, if it be not, as it ought to be, eradicated, must become silent.

We, of the United States, have numbers and power and wealth, and a growing commerce, and a most extensive country, and, as we may think without vanity, some portion of that intelligence and spirit, which belongs to our more cultivated neighbours. Once for all, then, if we can express ourselves in such a manner as not to incur the imputation of arrogance, we wish to say, that we consider ourselves as forming a part, and a respectable part, of the great public of civilized and Christian nations, having an interest in such subjects discussed before that public, as are not in themselves local or peculiar; with a good right of contribution, as far as our ability admits, to those discussions ourselves; and above all, a right to fair dealing and gentlemanly treatment from all who profess to write for the good of this public, and to be answerable to its judgment.

We put forth this claim in behalf of our country; and in behalf of the informed and reading class of its citizens. It is for the English writers to say, not whether it shall be admitted, that question we do not refer to their arbitrament, but whether, on their part, it shall be admitted freely, and with courtesy; or with hesitation, reluctance, ill nature, and ill manners.

## A GROWING COUNTRY

BY EDWARD AND JOHN EVERETT

*From THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW of July, 1820*

WE hope it will not be long, before no comparisons between the East, and the South, and the West, shall be made, with less intelligence

and forbearance, than those before us. All we want is to know each other better. We have now before us a letter from a gentleman, who crossed the Alleghany mountains, little more than thirty years ago, in which he complains of his "discoveries" being misrepresented; and which, though he seems to have descended the Ohio no farther than Louisville, appears to have excited, as well it might, the attention due to a voyage far beyond the extreme point of civilization. He might now pass to the Mississippi and "discover" nothing on his way but cultivation, wealth, and plenty, fertile fields, and plantations, inhabited by free and intelligent men;

And hills all rich with blossomed trees,  
And fields which promise corn and wine,  
And scattered cities crowning these.

He would find one of these towns, in its growth of twenty years, a third part as large as Boston, and three others a fifth, though it is neither the habit nor the policy of the inhabitants to settle in large cities. He would find the population of one of these *young* states, greater than that of Massachusetts, and another nearly double. Or, if he travelled on the great watery turnpike of the west, he would descend it, together with an immense amount of produce and population, on its *natural railways*, and meet its thousands of tons of steam navigation returning with the conveniences and luxuries, which this produce had purchased. He would find the Indian population extinct, and an individual of their nation a spectacle in the streets; and in its place an enlightened society, with the vigour and spirit of youth, and the habits of hardihood and intelligence, which belong to the nature of the enterprise they have just achieved. And lastly, he would see in the spirit of emigration, so universally extended, the means provided by nature to assimilate and unite the spreading bonds of citizens into one national character.

### AN ANONYMOUS POEM

*From THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW of May, 1815*

#### SUN-SET

WHERE is the hand to paint in colours bright  
The vivid splendour of the western sky,  
That sparkling flood of evanescent light,  
Pure and transparent, deepening in its dye.  
Elysian bowers and isles of rest on high  
Float o'er the amber tide, and pass away;  
Each moment changing to the raptured eye.  
Alas! no mortal hand can that blest vision stay,  
Guido's nor Titian's art can fix that fading ray.

Oh! I have gazed, when silent and alone,  
 Till I forgot the globe my feet have prest;  
 Have seen the shores of some bright world unknown,  
 And souls amid the mansions of the blest:  
 Scenes not for man, nor mortal senses drest:  
 Bright rosy meads, and seas of waving light  
 And fairy barks that on those waters rest;  
 They darken, they are gone; as fades the light,  
 And leave me still on earth enveloped all in night.

So fade the prospects early fancy forms  
 When life is fresh, and all the world is new;  
 Bright are the clouds which soon must meet in storms,  
 Bright all with hope, too happy to be true.  
 Soon sets the beam, and darkness bounds the view,  
 So the ethereal soul which did this body move  
 Leaves the dull clod on earth from which it grew;  
 Glances away, where sister souls above  
 Bloom in immortal youth, immortal light and love.

## THE GENIUS OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE

*From THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW of September, 1879*

THERE never surely was a powerful, active, continually effective mind less round, more lopsided, than that of NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE. If there were aught of dispraise in this, it would not be said by me,—by an Englishman of an American whom I knew, by an Englishman of letters of a brother on the other side of the water, much less by me, an English novelist, of an American novelist. The blacksmith, who is abnormally strong in his arm, gives the world the advantage of his strength. The poor bird, whose wretched life is sacrificed to the unnatural growth of that portion of him which the gourmands love, does produce the desired dainties in all their perfection. We could have hardly had “Childe Harold” except from a soured nature. The seraphic excellence of “Hiawatha” and “Evangeline” could have proceeded only from a mind which the world’s roughness had neither toughened nor tainted. So from Hawthorne we could not have obtained that weird, mysterious, thrilling charm with which he has awed and delighted us had he not allowed his mind to revel in one direction, so as to lose its fair proportions.

I have been specially driven to think of this by the strong divergence between Hawthorne and myself. It has always been my object to draw my little pictures as like to life as possible, so that my readers

should feel that they were dealing with people whom they might probably have known, but so to do it that the every-day good to be found among them should allure, and the every-day evil repel; and this I have attempted, believing that such ordinary good and ordinary evil would be more powerful in repelling or alluring than great and glowing incidents which, though they might interest, would not come home to the minds of readers. Hawthorne, on the other hand, has dealt with persons and incidents which were often but barely within the bounds of possibility,—which were sometimes altogether without those bounds,—and has determined that his readers should be carried out of their own little mundane ways, and brought into a world of imagination in which their intelligence might be raised, if only for a time, to something higher than the common needs of common life.

No one will feel himself ennobled at once by having read one of my novels. But Hawthorne, when you have studied him, will be very precious to you. He will have plunged you into melancholy, he will have overshadowed you with black forebodings, he will almost have crushed you with imaginary sorrows; but he will have enabled you to feel yourself an inch taller during the process. Something of the sublimity of the transcendent, something of the mystery of the unfathomable, something of the brightness of the celestial, will have attached itself to you, and you will all but think that you too might live to be sublime, and revel in mingled light and mystery.

The creations of American literature generally are no doubt more given to the speculative,—less given to the realistic,—than are those of English literature. On our side of the water we deal more with beef and ale, and less with dreams. Even with the broad humor of Bret Harte, even with the broader humor of Artemus Ward and Mark Twain, there is generally present an undercurrent of melancholy, in which pathos and satire are intermingled. There was a touch of it even with the simple-going Cooper and the kindly Washington Irving. Melancholy and pathos, without the humor, are the springs on which all Longfellow's lines are set moving. But in no American writer is to be found the same predominance of weird imagination as in Hawthorne.

I will take a few of his novels,—those which I believe to be the best known,—and will endeavor to illustrate my idea of his genius by describing the manner in which his stories have been told.

*The Scarlet Letter* is, on the English side of the water, perhaps the best known. It is so terrible in its pictures of diseased human nature as to produce most questionable delight. The reader's interest never flags for a moment. There is nothing of episode or digression. The author is always telling his one story with a concentration of energy which, as we can understand, must have made it impossible for him to deviate. The reader will certainly go on with it to the end very quickly, entranced, excited, shuddering, and at times almost wretched. His consolation will be that he too has been able to see into these black

depths of the human heart. The story is one of jealousy,—of love and jealousy,—in which love is allowed but little scope, but full play is given to the hatred which can spring from injured love. Hatred, fear, and shame are the passions which revel through the book. To show how a man may so hate as to be content to sacrifice everything to his hatred; how another may fear so that, even though it be for the rescue of his soul, he can not bring himself to face the reproaches of the world; how a woman may bear her load of infamy openly before the eyes of all men,—this has been Hawthorne's object.

As a novel *The House of the Seven Gables* is very inferior to *The Scarlet Letter*. The cause of this inferiority would, I think, be plain to any one who had himself been concerned in the writing of novels. When Hawthorne proposed to himself to write *The Scarlet Letter* the plot of his story was clear to his mind. He wrote the book because he had the story strongly, lucidly manifest to his own imagination. In composing the other he was driven to search for a plot, and to make a story. *The Scarlet Letter* was written because he had it to write, and the other because he had to write it. The novelist will often find himself in the latter position. He has characters to draw, lessons to teach, philosophy perhaps which he wishes to expose, satire to express, humor to scatter abroad. These he can employ gracefully and easily if he have a story to tell. If he have none, he must concoct something of a story laboriously, when his lesson, his characters, his philosophy, his satire, and his humor will be less graceful and less easy. All the good things I have named are there in *The House of the Seven Gables*; but they are brought in with less artistic skill, because the author has labored over his plot, and never had it clear to his own mind. . . .

But no one should read *The House of the Seven Gables* for the sake of the story, or neglect to read it because of such faults as I have described. It is for the humor, the satire, and what I may perhaps call the philosophy which permeates it, that its pages should be turned. Its pages may be turned on any day, and under any circumstances. To *The Scarlet Letter* you have got to adhere till you have done with it; but you may take this volume by bits, here and there, now and again, just as you like it. There is a description of a few poultry, melancholy, unproductive birds, running over four or five pages, and written as no one but Hawthorne could have written it. There are a dozen pages or more in which the author pretends to ask why the busy Judge does not move from his chair,—the Judge the while having dree'd his doom and died as he sat. There is a ghastly spirit of drollery about this which would put the reader into full communion with Hawthorne if he had not read a page before, and did not intend to read a page after. To those who can make literary food of such passages as these, *The House of the Seven Gables* may be recommended. To others it will be caviare. . . .

In speaking of *The Marble Faun*, as I will call the story, I hardly

know whether, as a just critic, to speak first of its faults or of its virtues. As one always likes to keep the sweetest bits for the end of the banquet, I will give priority of place to my caviling. The great fault of the book lies in the absence of arranged plot. The author, in giving the form of a novel to the beautiful pictures and images which his fancy has enabled him to draw, and in describing Rome and Italian scenes as few others have described them, has in fact been too idle to carry out his own purpose of constructing a tale. We will grant that a novelist may be natural or supernatural. Let us grant, for the occasion, that the latter manner, if well handled, is the better and the more efficacious. And we must grant also that he who soars into the supernatural need not bind himself by any of the ordinary trammels of life. His men may fly, his birds may speak. His women may make angelic music without instruments. His cherubs may sit at the piano. This wide latitude, while its adequate management is much too difficult for ordinary hands, gives facility for the working of a plot. But there must be some plot, some arrangement of circumstances, with an intelligible conclusion, or the reader will not be satisfied. If, then, a ghost, who,—or shall I say which?—is made on all occasions to act as a *Deus ex machina*, and to create and to solve every interest, we should know something of the ghost's antecedents, something of the causes which have induced him, or it, to meddle in the matter under discussion. The ghost of Hamlet's father had a manifest object, and the ghost of Banquo a recognized cause. In *The Marble Faun* there is no ghost, but the heroine of the story is driven to connive at murder, and the hero to commit murder, by the disagreeable intrusion of a personage whose *raison d'être* is left altogether in the dark. "The gentle reader," says our author as he ends his narrative, "would not thank us for one of those minute elucidations which are so tedious and after all so unsatisfactory in clearing up the romantic mysteries of a story." There our author is, I think, in error. His readers will hardly be so gentle as not to require from him some explanation of the causes which have produced the romantic details to which they have given their attention, and will be inclined to say that it should have been the author's business to give an explanation neither tedious nor unsatisfactory. The critic is disposed to think that Hawthorne, as he continued his narrative, postponed his plot till it was too late, and then escaped from his difficulty by the ingenious excuse above given. As a writer of novels, I am bound to say that the excuse can not be altogether accepted.

In *The Marble Faun*, as in all Hawthorne's tales written after *The Scarlet Letter*, the reader must look rather for a series of pictures than for a novel. It would, perhaps, almost be well that a fastidious reader should cease to read when he comes within that border, toward the end, in which it might be natural to expect that the strings of a story should be gathered together and tied into an intelligible knot. This would be peculiarly desirable in regard to *The Marble Faun*, in

which the delight of that fastidious reader, as derived from pictures of character and scenery, will be so extreme that it should not be marred by a sense of failure in other respects.

In speaking of this work in conjunction with Hawthorne's former tales, I should be wrong not to mention the wonderful change which he effected in his own manner of writing when he had traveled out from Massachusetts into Italy. As every word in his earlier volumes savors of New England, so in *The Marble Faun* is the flavor entirely that of Rome and of Italian scenery. His receptive imagination took an impress from what was around him, and then gave it forth again with that wonderful power of expression which belonged to him. Many modern writers have sought to give an interest to their writings by what is called local coloring; but it will too often happen that the reader is made to see the laying on of the colors. In Hawthorne's Roman chronicle the tone of the telling is just as natural—seems to belong as peculiarly to the author,—as it does with *The Scarlet Letter* or *The House of the Seven Gables*.

ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

## A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT LINCOLN

*From THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW of April, 1864*

THE publishers of THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW have had the honor of receiving the following letter from the President of the United States.

EXECUTIVE MANSION,  
WASHINGTON, January 16, 1864.

"MESSRS. CROSBY AND NICHOLS:—

"GENTLEMEN: The number for this month and year of THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW was duly received, and for which please accept my thanks. Of course I am not the most impartial judge; yet, with due allowance for this I venture to hope that the article entitled 'The President's Policy' will be of value to the country. I fear I am not quite worthy of all which is therein kindly said of me personally.

The sentence of twelve lines, commencing at the top of page 252, I could wish to be not exactly as it is. In what is there expressed, the writer has not correctly understood me. I have never had a theory that Secession could absolve States or people from their obligations. Precisely the contrary is asserted in the Inaugural Address; and it was because of my belief in the continuation of these obligations, that I was puzzled, for a time, as to denying the legal rights of those citizens who remained individually innocent of treason or rebellion. But I mean no more now than to merely call attention to this point.

Yours respectfully,

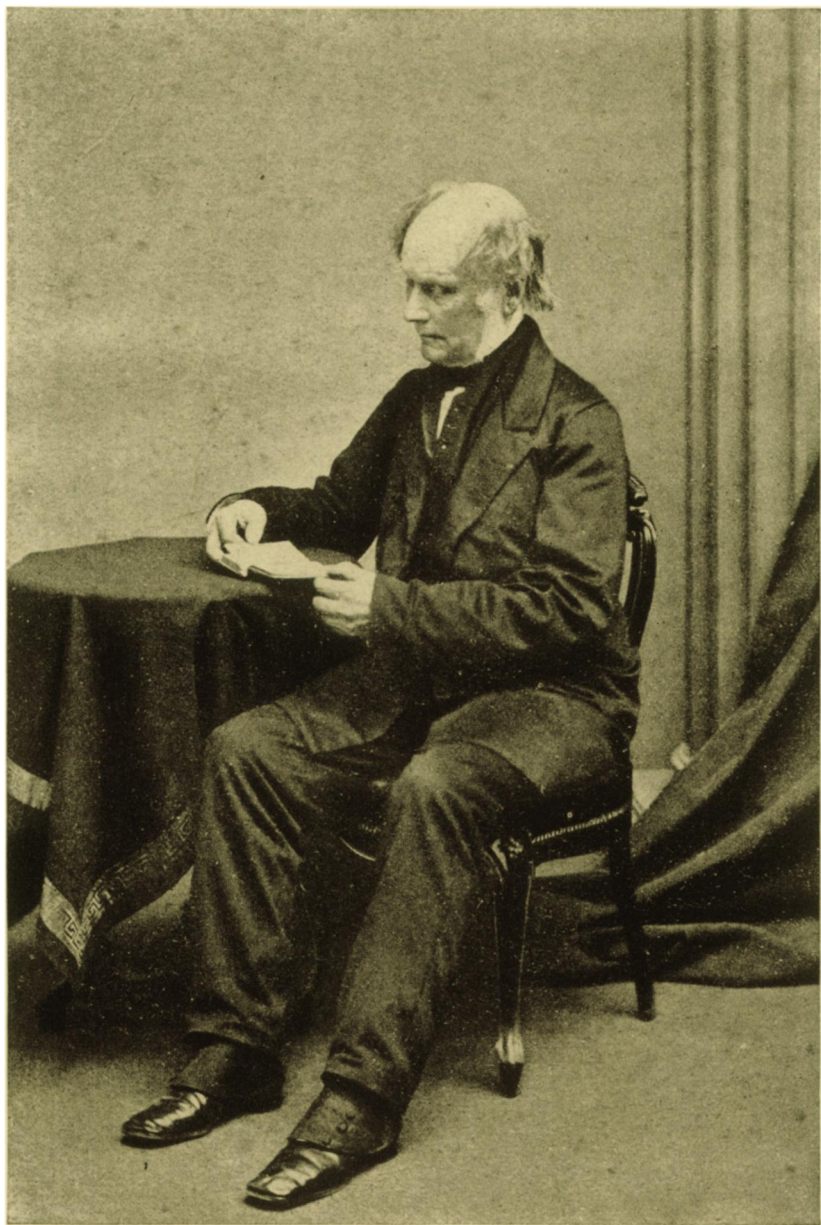
A. LINCOLN.

The sentence to which the President refers is the following:—



Even so long ago as when Mr. Lincoln, not yet convinced of the danger and magnitude of the crisis, was endeavoring to persuade himself of Union majorities at the South, and to carry on a war that was half peace, in the hope of a peace that would have been all war,—while he was still enforcing the Fugitive Slave Law, under some theory that Secession, however it might absolve States from their obligations, could not escheat them of their claims under the Constitution, and that slaveholders in rebellion had alone, among mortals, the privilege of having their cake and eating it at the same time,—the enemies of free government were striving to persuade the people that the war was an Abolition crusade. To rebel without reason was proclaimed as one of the rights of man, while it was carefully kept out of sight that to suppress rebellion is the first duty of government.

[Nothing could have been further from the intention of the Editors than to misrepresent the opinions of the President. They merely meant that, in their judgment, the policy of the Administration was at first such as practically to concede to any rebel who might choose to profess loyalty, rights under the Constitution whose corresponding obligations he repudiated.]



WILLARD PHILLIPS  
THE SECOND EDITOR OF THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW,  
1817-1818.